

DAYBREAK :

A POEM,

BY

GEORGE FAIRLEY BECK.

*"Time, in likeness of a guide,
Leads the Republic, as a bride,
Up to God's side."*

SWINBURNE.

TORONTO:

1873.

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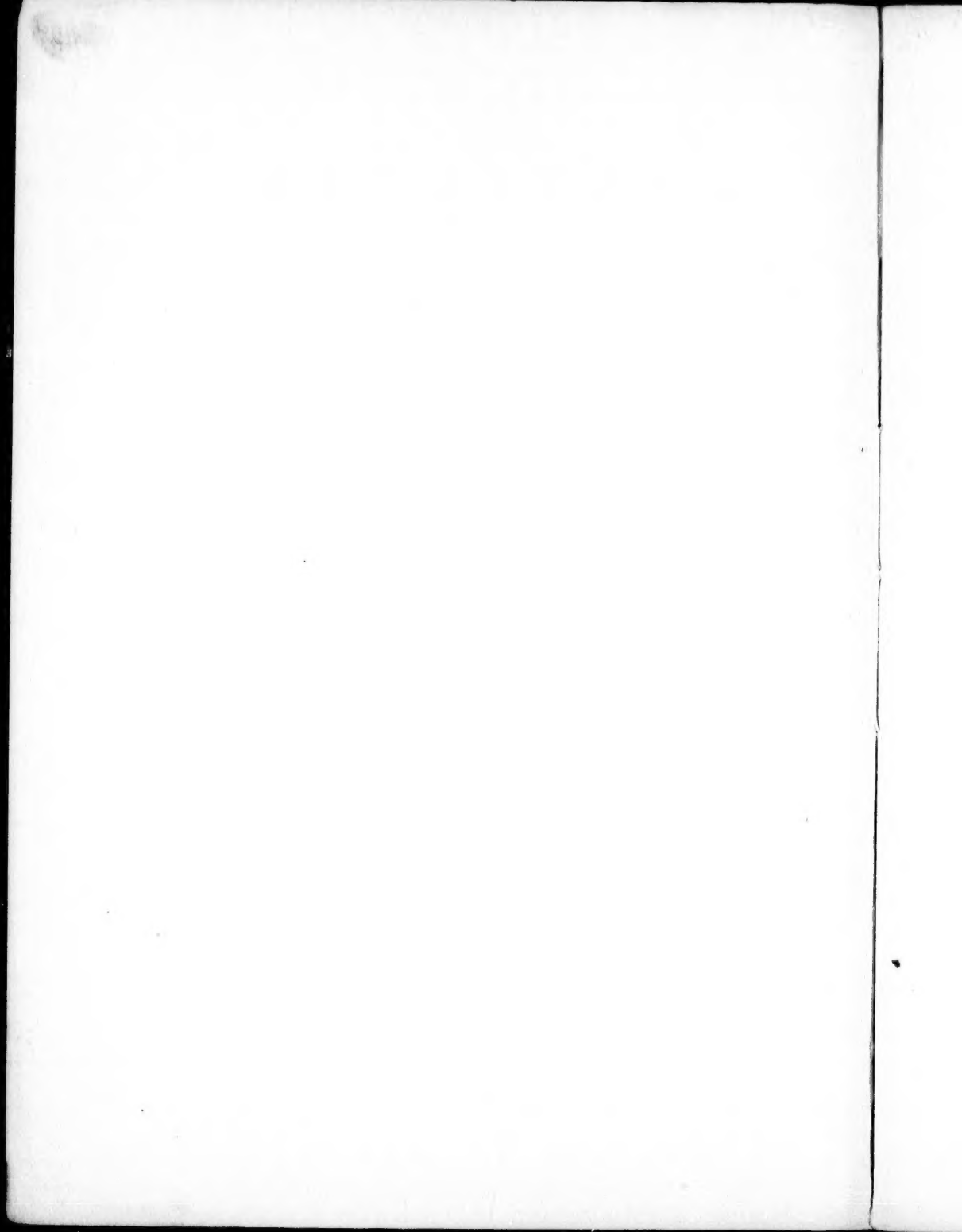
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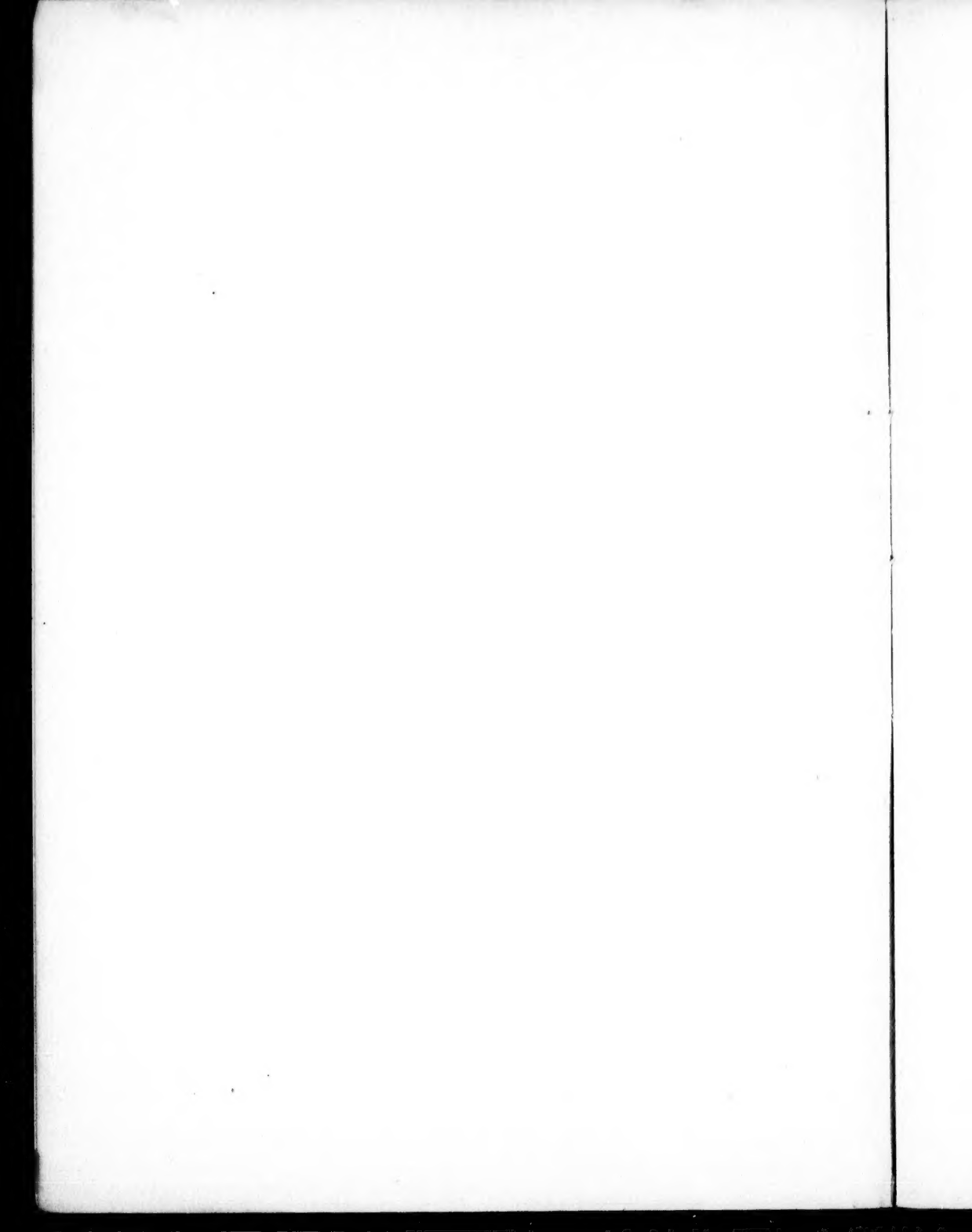
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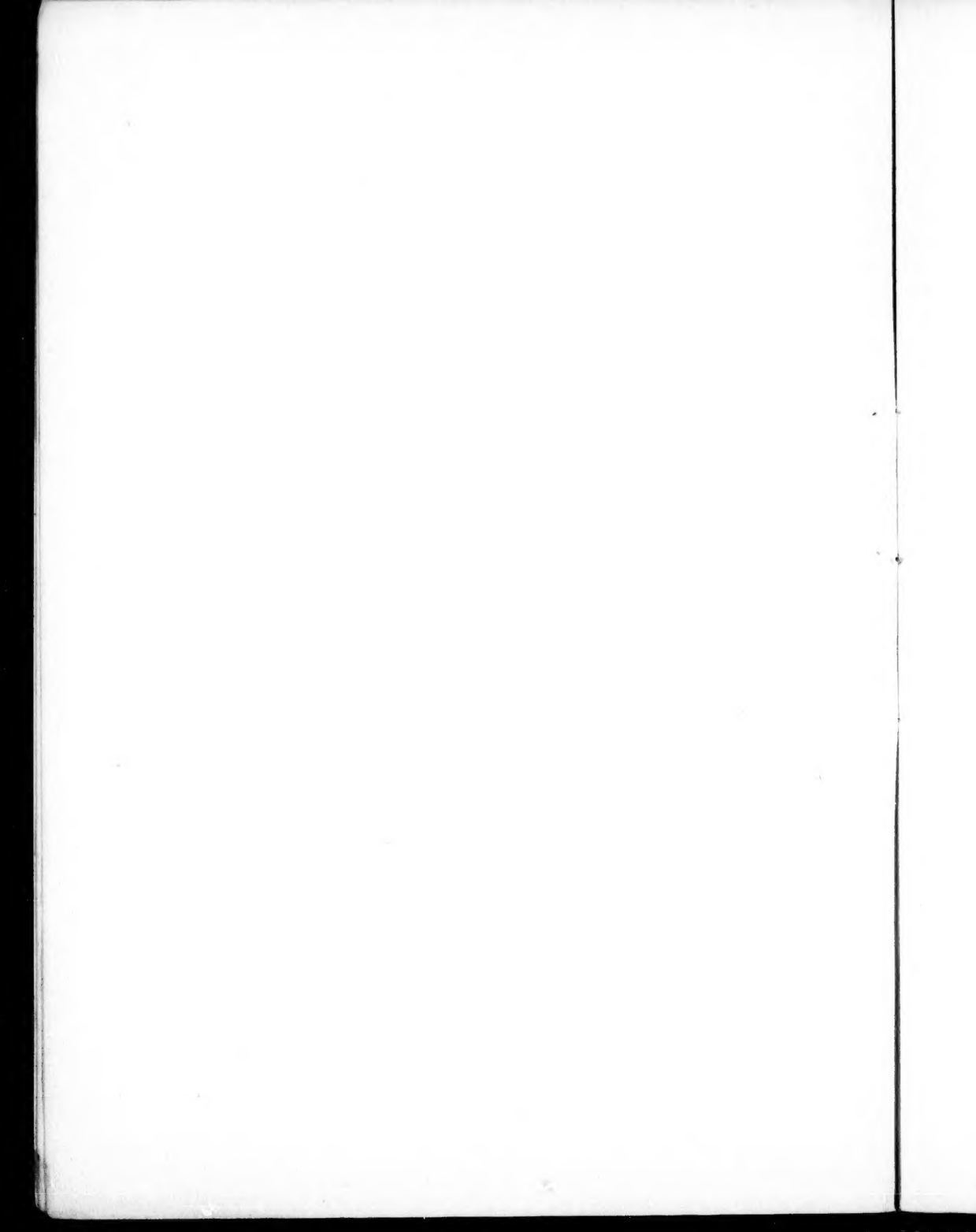
TO THE MEMORY OF

JOSEPH MAZZINI

THIS TRIFLE IS INSCRIBED.



DAYBREAK.



I.

Behold! O soul of man, the morning break—
The night, that wrapped thee long, hath passed away ;
From thy deep sleep, at last, thou dost awake,
Standing all glorious in the light of day ;
From doubt and fear is cleared thy perfect way.
Henceforth straight onward in resistless might,
Will be thy course, with nought to dim thy way,
For, far behind thee, hast thou cast the night ;
And wrong is crushed and dead, and now gives way to right.

II.

Oh, liberty! there once was one who gave
His soul's high power of poesy to thee ;
His life was ended in the moaning wave,
Of his blue murmuring Italian sea.
His beauteous spirit, high, and pure, and free,
Disdained to bow before dark custom's throne ;
To the God of human error kneeled not he (1),
But to great nature bowed he down alone ;
And, beside her great power, no other God did own.

III.

In its long progress to the perfect day,
 The soul of man each new religion made,
 Still upward going in its destined way—
 In chains of doubt and error long delayed ;
 Fashioning phantoms—of itself afraid—
 To its own thoughts and wishes bowed it low ;
 Its Gods, with all its passions, were arrayed.
 To these it bowed itself and worshipped so,
 Each thought of love or hate, or joy, or grief, or woe.

IV.

Then Christ arose, and taught the listening crowd ;
 The Gods of Rome before his face grew dim ;
 Unto him soon whole races humbly bowed,
 And nations knelt in after days to him.
 But now, in the light of morn, his star grows dim (2) ;
 The light of truth has fallen on man's soul,
 And superstition passeth as a dream ;
 The sun of truth has pierced the clouds that roll
 Around her way, and now she climbs unto her goal.

V.

O, Great Republic ! Thou dost come a-near—

We hail thee, who have waited for thee long ;
Before thy face fast fly revenge and fear,

And right is throned now in place of wrong.

The weak no more down-trodden by the strong,
And his soul, freed from superstition's chain,

Man shall soar up in hope and courage strong,
With nought his aspirations to restrain,
And thus his destined place and glory shall attain.

VI.

O, England ! Thou hast waked from out thy trance,

And light is fallen on thy closed eyes ;
Among the nations first thou dost advance,

Standing all glorious in the red sunrise—

Spread out thy banner to the morning skies !
Behold each nation now is waking from her sleep,

And casts the slumber from her closed eyes ;
Long hast thou lain in slumber dark and deep,
But now the time is come to wake thee out of sleep.

VII.

And thou Italia! of the golden skies—

What shall we say, fair sunny land, of thee?

Behold, in all her beauty, fair she lies

Beside her softly murmuring summer sea—

A land so beautiful must needs be free.

Holy to us thou art, for in thee lies

The poet of divinest liberty.

Whose soul was tuned to loftiest melodies,

And who so long did hope to see this bright sunrise.

VIII.

Great, O Canada! shall be thy name—

Among the nations foremost thou shalt be;

Perchance, as sister, thou shalt one day claim

Britannia, ancient ruler of the sea,

May thy new people be unchained and free!

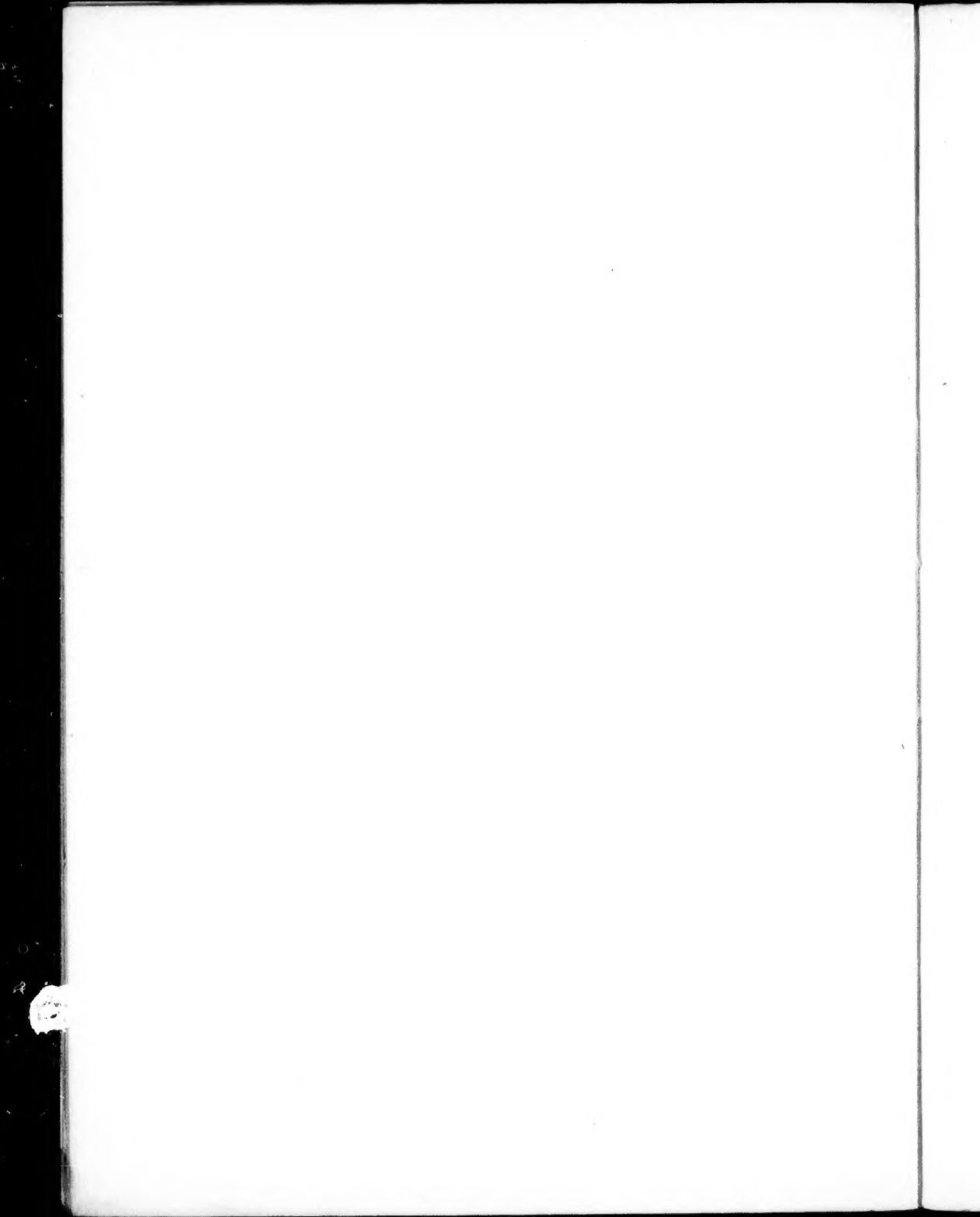
For thee there sounds the tramp of freedom now,

The light of morning early dawns on thee—

The seal of greatness set upon thy brow,

To thee, from nature's hand, unnumbered blessings flow.

NOTES.



(1.) "To the God of human error kneeled not he."

The existing idea of God is utterly at variance with reason and common sense. Because man works and strives through life to attain some end, or accomplish some object, he imagines he has a will ; but in truth, he is in fact but acting by the internal necessity of his own nature, for his mind, like every thing else in nature, is *force*, which is ever developing. The great minds of the race, which have wrought changes in the world, are but portions of the infinite mind, which is thus ever manifesting itself in the universe. Will is only a name we give to this force , and thus we endow the Supreme Being with a will ; but this is but another name for the original and ever active force of nature.

(2.) "Now, in the light of morn, his star grows dim."

It is not here meant to disparage Christianity ; for, like every other religion, it is, doubtless, a stage in the development of the human mind ; and its high moral doctrines shew a great advance on preceding religions ; and it is in this sense a revelation from God. "Trust in God," is but a belief in the doctrine of necessity ; for everything in nature must act precisely as it does. Christianity is the endeavour of the human mind to attain that state of perfection, when it will cease to employ its energies in striving in professions, trades, &c., (which, however, are a necessary stage in its development) and "when the whole world is fed and clad out of a vast surplus of corn and clothing produced with lightest labour," then it will be free to employ itself in the contemplation of the universe, and in knowing and loving God, which, as Spinoza says, is its highest happiness.